

Fordingbridge Rural District Council

Sanitary Authority.

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1898,

BY THE


Medical Officer of Health

TO THE

FORDINGBRIDGE UNION.

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DURING the year 1898, there have been registered :—

152 Births (87 males, 65 females). This shows a decrease of 37, as compared with last year. This is a most extraordinarily low number, by far the lowest during my term of office, for I find by reference that the average number of births per annum during the past 11 years (1887 to 1897 inclusive) is 180·45. It is hard to account for such a sudden drop. As is usually the case in this district, the males are in excess of the females.

96 Deaths from all causes. This is equal to 15·3 per 1,000 of the population, which numbers approximately 6,236 souls. This number is 12 more than that for last year, but is still well within the average number of deaths per annum during the past 11 years (as above), which is 102·45. A severe epidemic of Influenza in the early months of the year, may have helped to pull up the death-rate. 58 of the deaths occurred in the first half of the year, when Influenza and other Catarrhal and Pulmonary Diseases were rife, and 38 in the second half.

COMMENTS ON THE DEATH-RATE.

Of the **96** Deaths, 44 were males, 52 females. **39** were *70 years or over* that age (22 males, 17 females), **24** being *80 years or over* (16 males, 8 females), and **4** males lived to be *90 years old or over*, the oldest reaching 97 years. The 39 over 70 years of age averaged 81·41 years each. The 22 males averaged 83·13 years each, and the 17 females 79·17 years each. The average age of those above 70 years of age is very high indeed, and especially of the males.

11 were *between 60 and 70 years* of age (2 males, 9 females).

The mortality *below 1 year* of age amounted to **15** (10 males, 5 females), 2 more than last year. **54** of the total number of deaths were at the two extremes of life, and **65** of the 96 deaths occurred below 1 year and over 60 years of age, leaving **31** deaths to be distributed between the intervening 59 years. No deaths are recorded between the ages of 5 and 15 years.

Considering the increase of deaths above last year, these figures will be found to run on very much the same lines, but the average ages are a good deal in excess of those for last year.

ZYMOTIC DISEASES INCLUDED IN TABLE B.

Under this heading we have recorded 12 cases of *Scarlet Fever*, 10 cases of *Diphtheria*, 3 cases of *Puerperal Fever*, and 14 cases of *Erysipelas*.

Scarlet Fever—Of the 12 cases reported, two groups of four each occurred in two families, the other 4 cases were separated as regards families, but they occurred in two groups of two each as regards time of outbreak. All the cases were favourable and made a good recovery. One of the cases was preceded by *Diphtheria*. Isolation and Disinfection were carried out as usual.

Diphtheria—Most of the 10 cases reported were in separate houses and at separate time, although one of the cases followed on in one of the *Scarlet Fever* houses. One case of a very severe type occurred at Breamore, but ultimately recovered. None of the cases proved fatal. All premises were inspected and necessary directions as to improved sanitation were given; also isolation and disinfection were carefully observed.

Puerperal Fever—Of the 3 cases reported, 2 proved fatal, and one recovered after a very long and tedious illness. No certain cause could be traced in either case. One fatal case was a complication of placenta prævia at the 7th month.

Erysipelas—Of the 14 cases reported, only one was below 5 years of age. All were in separate places, except that one of the cases was the child of the third and non-fatal *Puerperal* case mentioned above, and it almost seemed as though the mother was infected by the child in some way, as the very severe onset of Phlegmonous *Erysipelas* in the child and the premature confinement of the mother (followed by severe septic poisoning) were almost contemporary. The child was removed to the Nursing Home, as was the mother as soon as possible, and both made good recoveries. Three other of the cases were of the severe Phlegmonous variety, and 2 were treated by the subcutaneous injection of antistreptococcus serum with immediately beneficial results. In one case the woman was 7 months pregnant at the time, but although she was desperately ill, she recovered and went on to full time without any untoward symptom. No case was fatal.

ZYMOTIC DISEASES NOT INCLUDED IN TABLE B.

There are no cases of Measles reported.

Influenza—35 cases below, 135 above 5 years of age are reported. I reported the presence of the epidemic in the early months of the year, when writing my last report. The Disease spread over the District with alarming rapidity, and was only second in severity to the 1891-92 epidemic. 5 Deaths are directly attributable to the disease, 1 below, 4 above 5 years of age. The one below five years was complicated with Convulsions. The presence of the disease had doubtless much to do with the increased death-rate under Pulmonary Diseases from 14 in 1897 to 33 in 1898, and also with the very much greater mortality in the first half of the year as compared with the second half.

Other or Doubtful Fevers—9 cases below, 26 above 5 years of age are reported, and there are included under this head, Febricula, Varicella, Mumps, &c. No fatal cases are reported.

Pertussis or Whooping Cough—Only 6 cases of illness under this head are reported amongst Pauper Patients, although a great many more must have occurred as remnants of the epidemic in 1897. Five fatal cases are reported, all under 5 years, many of them, doubtless, being complications of cases occurring earlier in the Autumn. Just out of the district I had two cases in two only children in a family, which at once went on to Convulsions during the first week of the disease, and both died within 3 or 4 days of each other.

OTHER DISEASES.

Diarrhœa and Dysentery—7 cases below and 31 cases above 5 years of age are reported amongst Pauper Patients, and 4 cases proved fatal, 3 below, 1 above 5 years of age. The total number of cases is 12 more than last year, probably due to the very great heat which prevailed.

Respiratory Disorders—Under this head are included *Phthisis*, *Pleurisy*, *Pneumonia*, *Asthma*, *Bronchitis*, and *Catarrh*, and amongst Pauper Patients, 33 cases below, and 122 above 5 years of age are reported. These totals are rather below those for 1897, but one must take into consideration that they do not represent dispensary and club patients, of whom there are a great number in the district. 8 deaths from *Phthisis* are recorded, an increase of 1 on the number for last

year; all of them were above 5 years of age. All were cases of *Pulmonary Tuberculosis*, 5 of them Acute, 1 complicating and arising during the Puerperal state. 25 deaths from *Bronchitis*, *Pneumonia*, and *Broncho-Pneumonia* are recorded, 4 below, 21 above 5 years of age. Adding the 5 fatal cases of *Whooping Cough*, we find the total fatality to be 30 as compared with 9 last year, which was very exceptionally low. This year's total is exceptionally heavy however, as it generally ranges about 20 or so. Of the 25 cases, 7 are returned as *Acute Bronchitis*, 6 as *Chronic Bronchitis*, mostly with Heart or other complications, 4 as *Broncho-Pneumonia* with complications, 2 as *Influenzal Bronchitis*, and 2 as *Pneumonia*.

We thus see that the total death-rate for Respiratory Disorders (including Phthisis) is 38, as compared with 16 for 1897, an increase of nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as many.

Heart Disease—11 deaths occurred under this heading, as compared with 15 in 1897. 4 of the cases are returned as *Heart Disease and Uræmia*, 4 as *Failure of the Heart's action* (on 2 of these an inquest was held), 1 as *Mitral Regurgitation*, 1 as *Fatty Degeneration*, and 1 as *Aortic Aneurism*.

New Growths—I am pleased to be able to record a great decrease in this class of cases. 4 cases are reported as compared with 8 last year. 2 of the cases are returned as *Cancer of the Womb* (one of these was really carried off by Influenza, and appears under that heading), 1 as *Cancer of the Liver*, and 1 as *Epithelioma of the Antrum*, operated on 6 months before death, but unsuccessfully.

3 Deaths from *Injury* are reported—1 of *Intestinal Obstruction*, followed by operation which proved unsuccessful, 1 of *Fracture of the Skull*, and 1 of *Hæmatoma of the Buttock*, followed by *Recurrent Hæmorrhage* after operation.

8 Deaths from *Cerebral Hæmorrhage* occurred, 1 from *Paralysis and Bedsores*, 1 from *Hydrocephalus*, 2 from *Convulsions*, 2 from *Chronic Nephritis*, 1 from *Diabetes Mellitus*, 1 from *Pernicious Anæmia*, *Convulsions and Coma*, 1 from *Gangrene of the Foot*, 1 from *Suffocation from Croup*, and 3 from *Premature Birth*.

10 Deaths occurred in the Fordingbridge Union Workhouse—all elderly people, and 1 Death in the Fordingbridge Nursing Home.

The total number of cases of sickness amongst Paupers is 870 in the Out-door Department, and 53 in the Workhouse. The Out-door is 20 less than in 1897.

GENERAL SANITARY CONDITION OF THE DISTRICT.

During the year 1898, the working of the Public Health Act has gone on very much as before, but little of special moment has occurred. Approximately the same number of Houses have been inspected, and the usual directions as to improved sanitary conditions have been given.

The Inspector of Nuisances continues to work very satisfactorily with me, and obtains my advice in any case which he finds any difficulty in dealing with. He has periodically inspected the School premises in the neighbourhood, and has also inspected any premises where insanitary surroundings might be suspected from the outbreak of Diphtheria. He has also seen to the Disinfection of the few houses infected with Scarlet Fever.

Cases of overcrowding have been investigated, and measures to abate the nuisance so caused have been taken.

Various cottages have been more specially inspected, and in six cases I have condemned them as unfit for human habitation, in three cases they are to be rebuilt, in one thoroughly repaired, and in two they have been closed.

Several samples of drinking water have been tested and reported on.

A recurrent nuisance due to the filthy state of one house and wretched state of repair of another, having arisen at Martin, I thoroughly inspected and reported on both, with the result that one is to be closed and the other repaired.

The usual number of pigsty and privy nuisances have arisen, and have been dealt with. One particular recurrent pigsty nuisance occurring near the Union Workhouse was carefully inspected, and although I could not conscientiously give it as my opinion that the smell was actually injurious to health, I made such suggestions as I thought would abate the nuisance, and I believe this has been carried out.

In the case of a drain being laid under a house in Shaftesbury Street, I personally gave directions as to its laying, in order to prevent any injurious effects to the future tenants. I directed the Inspector of Nuisances to watch that these precautions were carried out, and on his informing me that the work had been unsatisfactorily done, I gave him directions which caused the whole drain to be uncovered and properly laid.

After the fatal case of Puerperal Fever following Placenta Prævia, the premises occupied by the deceased woman, and those adjoining, were inspected, and some very insanitary pigsties, close to the back doors, were removed to a greater distance from the houses.

During the very dry Summer, many of the street surface drains became very foul from the evaporation of the water which seals the traps. I had these thoroughly flushed and the nuisance was thus abated. I suggested to the Rural District Council the advisability of digging the dry mud out of many of the surface ponds in the neighbourhood, but I think the rain came before they began, although I believe they intended to act on my suggestion. Under the Quarry Fencing Act, I suggested that the Rural District Council should get numerous unfenced and dangerous gravel pits by the sides of the roads fenced in, and they have taken steps to have the same attended to.

The New Nursing Home has been built and completed on an excellent site, and is in every way most satisfactory. I personally inspected and approved the system of drainage, which I consider to be of the simplest and most satisfactory description that one could desire under the circumstances.

Concerning the cottage property in the neighbourhood, since my last report, one of the largest and poorest estates in the neighbourhood has been sold, much of it, especially the cottage property at Frogham, Blissford, &c., in small lots to separate purchasers, so that I think there is likely to be an improvement, at last, in the cottage property in this district; as I hear, already, of some cottages coming down to make room for new ones, and of others being repaired and improved. This is the very best thing that could have happened, as far as the housing of the working classes is concerned.

There is still no system of Sewage or Refuse Collection in the Town, and as I have so frequently pointed out before, this could be comparatively easily carried out at a fairly small cost, I should imagine, and thus the contamination of streams, &c., and the fouling of back premises by the storage of refuse and garbage could be prevented. I think it quite time that something should be done in this respect.

At the time of closing this report, the district seems to be in a very satisfactory state of health. There is no notifiable or infectious disease prevalent, although a few cases of Influenza have occurred; and the death-rate is lower than usual for the time of year.

I append

REPORT OF INSPECTOR OF NUISANCES FOR THE
YEAR 1898.

Schools Inspected	9	Samples of Water taken for	
Lodging Houses Inspected	2	Analysis	3
Slaughter Houses Inspected	5	New Privy Accommodation	
Bakehouses Inspected	21	provided	3
Cottages Inspected.. ..	133	Privies Altered, Repaired or	
Filthy Houses Cleansed	5	Cleansed	10
Houses placed in habitable		Nuisances Reported or De-	
repair	4	tected	40
Houses Closed	2	Nuisances Abated	37
Houses Disinfected.. ..	5	Notices Served	6
Overcrowding Abated	6	Drains Altered or Repaired	7
Wells Sunk, Repaired or			
Cleansed	3		

ARTHUR E. ALEXANDER, A.S.I.,

Inspector of Nuisances.

HERBERT V. RAKE,*Medical Officer of Health for the Rural District Council
of the Fordingbridge Union.*

